

editorials & commentary

Survey Of Our Schools

The conventional wisdom is: — U.S. private schools, elementary and secondary, are gaining more and more pupils, mainly as a result of desegregation orders to public schools. — U.S. public schools, elementary and secondary, are losing pupils rapidly, largely as a result of desegregation. — Therefore, both private and public schools need more funds. Struggles over busing in cities like Boston and Louisville are cited to support this view. The numbers tell a different story. The National Center for Education Statistics has just completed the first systematic nationwide comparison of school attendance in U.S. public and private grade and high schools. The survey was done with the support and cooperation of the council for American Private Education and the National Catholic Educational Association, the two chief representatives of the U.S. private school system. It covers all private schools known to exist in the 1976-79 school years. It shows: — Public and private school enrollments are BOTH declining. — They are BOTH declining at about the same rate.

In 1976-77 there were 49.5 million public and private school pupils aged 5 to 17. In 1977-78 that number dropped to 48.8 million, last school year to 47.6 million. In the three-year span, the proportion of public school pupils shifted from

89.5 percent of the total to 89.3 percent. The proportion of private school pupils shifted from 10.5 percent to 10.7 percent.

In short, there was virtually no change. The number of public school pupils declined 1,758,000; the number of private school pupils declined 101,000 over the three years, refuting the widespread idea that massive numbers of public school youngsters were moving to private schools.

Those are the gross figures. They do not tell you if there are increasing numbers of black or Hispanic children in inner-city schools. They do not tell you about the impact of local situations such as those in Boston or Louisville. But the overall trends aren't in doubt.

The survey confirms the widely known fact that the total number of U.S. school-age children is decreasing and the widely unknown fact that the public school remain the dominant mode of educating most of our children.

The U.S. Census Bureau's figures show an identical trend, a decline in BOTH public and private school attendance from 1968 through 1978.

Cost is one reason the private schools — church-affiliated and non-denominational — have failed to make a dent in public school attendance. Last school year, the cost of sending a child to a private grade school averaged \$356; the cost of sending a youngster to a private high school averaged \$901.

DRAFT REGISTRATION:

Quaker Opposition

The American Friends Service Committee has expressed its total opposition to the President's call for a draft registration and increase in military spending, according to bill Harley, director of draft and military recruitment information in the Syracuse AFSC office. He stated "In a time of great tension and uncertainty, there is a desperate need for calm and reason. President Carter has instead called for measures which may serve to increase tension and bring us closer to a major conflict in the world."

"We question the motives of the President's call for draft registration, especially in light of his long-standing opposition to both," Harley said. "Despite assurances that there will be a

registration and no draft, proponents for draft registration in Congress have stated that induction of young people in the military will follow registration. With a military force of over two million people, the largest peace time force our history, we must question the purpose for which drafted forces would be used."

"We believe that the President has misread the American public, and does not understand the potential for widespread opposition to any draft laws. Over the greater part of our history, there has been no draft, and strong opposition to it when implemented, even in time of war," Harley noted.

Harley stated "In the context of Carter's call for an increase in defense spending and a more aggressive stance

in the Middle East; the call for registration is not a benign act, but one of escalation that would be easily followed by induction of young people into the military."

Harley said that the American Friends Service Committee would stand ready to help, through education and counseling, young men and women opposed to the draft and registration. He said "We do this in our belief that the way to security does not lie in increased military preparedness and an escalation of tensions in the world."

The American Friends Service Committee has sought since 1917 to put into practice the beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The AFSC holds fast to the Quaker testimonies of peace and non violence.

Dangers Of The Rural Mail Call

Going for the mail, for those whose mailboxes are located on the opposite side of the highway from the home in which they live, though it be but a short distance, is a daily hazard. It's more than that, it's a ridiculous game with death if one is not constantly alert to the danger.

For example, how does a person make it back through the flow of two-way traffic after reading a letter of great joy or deep and shocking sorrow? Occasionally, as I drive by I see across-the-road retrievers opening and reading letters while waiting for an adequate lull in the traffic to walk to the other side. I wonder, what if that letter contained news that was so bad that the reader lost a sense of immediate caution and in a daze stepped onto the road and into the path of the traffic. Surely, it must happen. The answer, it seems, is not to open your mail until you are on your home side of the road.

In the wake of the mail delivery vehicle I am not only amused but also appalled at the sight of old folks in nightclothes or women in pink hair curlers scooting across the busy highway between the zings of the morning traffic to fetch their mail. It worries me when I see school children dash over the asphalt as though their speed was their

main assurance of safety. Such observations make me wonder how many sleepy or speedy mail getters meet sudden death somewhere between their mailbox and their home side of the road. Should not this archaic and dangerous manner of delivering mail on heavily-used rural roads be replaced with a safer method? This is not to suggest that the carrier should snake from one side of the road to the other, but, perhaps, routes could be extended so that while one carrier starts at one end on one side, another starts at the opposite end on the

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opposite side. Although cross-the-road neighbors would have different delivery times, neither would have to worry about risking their lives simply to see if they had any mail.

Perhaps those who reside in isolated, off-the-main-road hamlets or small country communities where one must pick up their mail have the most rewarding set up. These short walks or

drives to the post office serve several purposes. They are mini-outings for many usually confined to their homes. They give one a chance to meet a few people and to converse about harmless things and doings. And if one is able to walk, so much the better. This gives one some exercise, contact with the weather and nature. It's also a relaxing time to think about pleasant things. Then there are those chance meetings and brief outbursts of conversation with others going to or coming from the post office. And if the postmaster's work load is light, and there are a few lingerers, there may be a little time for easy "visiting" and homey inquiries.

Those who simply walk but a hundred feet or so from the front of their house to get their mail at the breadloaf vault propped on top of a waist-high pole are usually denied such neighborly contact and casual conversation. At best they might wave rather automatically at the pert honk from a car speeding by, which, they would prefer to ignore in order to lessen their self-consciousness about coming out of the house in whatever clothes they may happen to be wearing. Most roadsters have learned to care little about how they appear to passing well-knowns or unknowns zipping by in their cars.

And so our mail is delivered to the designated spot meant for us, wherever it may be, and we promptly come to claim it in spite of what news it may bear for us.



MOSCOW 1980? — Maybe these fraternity brothers know something that the rest of us don't. While government officials in Washington seek to get the 1980 Summer Olympics moved out of Moscow, this group used the Soviet capital as

the theme for their float entered in the Potsdam Winter Carnival parade Sunday. The theme for the carnival this year is "Cities of the World." (Hal Stokes photo)

VIEWPOINT:

Neutral Sites For The Olympics

BY ROBERT ALLEN MILLER

Sports offer one of the purest forms of escape known to mankind. Games enlist skill and intelligence, the utmost concentration, and a sense of freedom from everyday reality.

However, can anyone deny that the Olympics do not have political overtones, or think that nations which compete philosophically, ideologically, and economically in their own self-interest will emerge from behind their fatuous rhetoric and stage an athletic event for the entire world free of propaganda? Perhaps Switzerland and a few other neutral countries would be capable of rising above the commonplace and stage a contest in time with the spirit of pure athletic competition. The Soviet Union is certainly not one of these nations and in some instances neither is the United States.

John F. Kennedy, in order to justify the President's Council on Physical Fitness, exclaimed that our growing softness is a menace to our security. This pronouncement is remarkably similar to one that the Soviet Communist Party made in 1925 declaring that sport should be used "as a means of rallying broad masses of workers and peasants around the various Party

Soviet and Trade Union organizations through which the masses of workers and peasants are to be drawn into social and political activity."

Thus, let us refrain from being self-righteous. As Anthony Lewis said in the New York Times the other day, "as we deplore the Soviet forces marching into Afghanistan and murdering its President, we Americans ought to remember that we once removed a Prime Minister in Iran, and led a coup in Guatemala, and conspired against an elected President in Chile."

We are of course aware of the differences between the American and the Soviet Olympic movements. Whereas the Russian athletes are professionals supported by the State those on the United States' team in many instances must sacrifice career goals in order to train properly for their particular event. Furthermore, ultimate success in the Olympics generally leads to only a moment of glory for U.S. competitors. Just a handful have been able to cash in on their victories. Conversely, a gold medalist from East Germany or Russia is more than likely to be taken care of for his or her entire life.

Yet, my purpose here is not to rectify

these inequities, though we feel obligated to chide the International Olympic Committee's flare for antiquated thinking, especially in matters concerning amateurism. Instead I propose that two permanent sites be chosen to hold the Summer and Winter Olympics from as soon as possible until interest in the Games is no longer apparent.

Given the present circumstances, a boycott of the Summer Olympics is one of the few non-violent measures that Mr. Carter can use against the Kremlin. Not going to Moscow robs the Soviets of something they long for: a stage from which they can showcase their supposed benevolence to an infatuated world. Without the United States some of the legitimacy would be snatched from the anticipated event. In the future I see no reason to punish athletes, some of whom are too young to appreciate the political might nations attach to the Games, for being dedicated to a sport. A neutral site for both the Summer and Winter Olympics is an imperative.

Editor's Note: Robert Miller is a writer living in New York City. He was formerly employed at the Courier and Freeman.

Letters

Thoughts On Water Plant

To the Editor: Several interesting facts surfaced at the recent "Water Hearing" in Potsdam.

The proposed ozone method will cost an estimated \$43,000 a year more than more conventional methods.

The ozone method uses considerably more electricity (energy) than other methods.

The ozone method is not at all common in the U.S. and a number of local engineers and scientists knowledgeable in this area question its effectiveness, long-term actions cost, and even safety in the proposed application. (I do not class myself as "knowledgeable in the area.")

After spending two years and \$200,000 on a study, answers to such questions as "what is the present level of the organics in our water?" were not obtainable at the hearing. And now an additional \$25,000 study is being undertaken.

The East facade of the present water works (facing the little park) is considered historically atractive and not to be destroyed. Yet the proposed new water works would effectively obscure this from public view.

The study never considered the alternative (to destroying the Senf business) of constructing the new water works as an addition directly on to the front of the present plant across Raymond street and into the parking lot, land already all owned by the village. (And Raymond St. ends just past the plant, so it isn't really disrupting an ordinary street...traffic to the Police Station could go around the new waterworks on Liberty St.)

I pose two thoughts:

Would any facts make the present monolithic village board opt for a more conventional and economical plant, or are they totally committed to the ozone method? (In which case was the \$200,000 study really a "study" of methods, or a design for a specific method already decided on?)

Why doesn't the village board have the option implied in the statement above investigated in the next study phase? It would seem we have lost enough tax-paying businesses already.

In conclusion, if two alternate proposals or solutions appear to provide the same end results, but one does so at considerably less cost to the taxpayers (either local, state, or national), doesn't it seem not only sensible but even essential to adopt the less expensive one, considering the present state of New York's economy?

For example, when an extra \$300,000 grant (and grants tax money too) was not available for a high-rise five-story senior citizen housing development, recently the plan was redrawn as a two-story structure providing exactly the same number of units, same community rooms, etc. at the same cost and at no delay in construction. And yet an editorial called this a "loss for taxpayers," or words to that effect. Strange.

Sincerely,
Dr. Richard Sanford
Rt. 2 Potsdam, N.Y.

'Hire-A-Youth' Is Now In Business

To the Editor: The Potsdam "Hire-a-Youth" program is now in business. The agency, sponsored by the Potsdam Youth Center, Inc., is a referral service, matching the talents of high school students looking for employment within the community. The young people will be available for numerous jobs on a one-time, occasional or part-time basis. They are interested in babysitting, housecleaning, outdoor work, running errands, pet care, woodcutting, companion or senior citizen, etc.

An index of all students between ages 14 and 18 who wish to register is now being assembled. Students may do so by stopping in our office next to the Nurse's Room in the High School.

Prospective employers are requested not to call the main high school number for this service. Anyone wishing to hire a youth may do so by calling 265-4840 daily between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., including Saturdays.

Carol Beamer, Director
Scott Bassil, Assst. Director
"Hire-a-Youth," Box 71
Civic Center, Potsdam, N.Y.

They Own Their House

Canton Savings and Loan Bank. This mortgage was co-signed by alumni officers of our own Zeta Phi Building Corporation. The original mortgage, which was used to purchase the lot and the then existing house was paid off in 1970.

Ownership of the Alpha Chi Rho fraternity house in Potsdam lies with the undergraduate and alumni brothers of Alpha Chi Rho, I, and the executive officers of the Zeta Phi Building Corporation, have never had the privilege of meeting Mr. Cassara. I am confident a suitable retraction will accompany this letter in your next Courier Freeman.

Sincerely,
David L. Elwyn
President, Zeta Phi
Chapter of the National
Fraternity of Alpha Chi Rho
'Nuff said.—Ed.

From Our Files

Jan. 1, 1880—A good deal of nice wood has been hauled into town the past week. Dry wood has become something of a drug on the market. The price for good hard wood ranges from \$3 to \$3.50 per cord. Close buyers are getting body maple, saved four foot long, for \$3.50 cash.

HANNAWA FALLS, April 1, 1880—There will be a supper party at the residence of Mrs. Gardner Cox on Friday evening of this week at 30 cents per couple.

April 22, 1880—The Northern New York ME Conference was held at Ilion. The report of the committee on sinful amusements was adopted. It takes strong ground against theater going, dancing, games, walking matches, horse racing, etc.

April 29, 1880—Real Estate Changes. Mr. Peter Ansted has sold his new house on Lawrence Ave., with lot four rods in front, to Prof. G.H. Shuts, of the Normal School for \$2,500.

WEST POTSDAM, May 20, 1880—The cheese factory is making nine cheese of about 60 lb. each day. A sale was made last Saturday at 12 cents.

Sept. 16, 1880—The Potsdam Cornet Band gave a street serenade Saturday evening. The band thinks of giving another concert to aid in clearing off the

balance due on uniforms.

Sept. 23, 1880—Our village water works now supply free soap to those who use the water for drinking purposes, with rather more meat in it than is usually found in that furnished at city soup houses.

Oct. 7, 1880—During the past 30 years, Moses Leonard of Pierrepont has killed 44 panthers and 1,500 deer.

Oct. 7, 1880—A force of men is now engaged in clearing off the swamp tract, about a mile west of the village. It is mainly owned by W.W. Woods of Woods Falls, Clinton County. There are some 130 acres in the swamp, which, when cleared and drained will make valuable land.

Oct. 7, 1880—The Catholic Apostolic Church is about to erect a new parsonage on the site of the old one on Maple St. Its architectural style will be something new in this section and its cost will be about \$1,500.

Why is a bridegroom often more expensive than a bride? Because the bride is given away, but the groom is often sold.

Feb. 17, 1881—At the Potsdam Town meeting of Feb. 8, 1881, 73 men were appointed Path Masters for the town. Each man was responsible for the care of the roads in his district.
Compiled by Earl Pattison

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